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Author(s): Richard W. Steele

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American Popular Opinion and the War Against Germany: The Issue of Negotiated Peace, 1942

RICHARD W. STEELE

THE Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor brought war but not unity to the American people. Those who had opposed American policy on the eve of hostilities continued to concede neither the foresight nor necessity of that policy, and remained unreconciled to the government's internationalist assumptions. True, the foreign policy controversy, at least in the terms it had been debated, was adjourned. Patriotism dictated that doubts concerning the war be left unspoken. Nevertheless, although the malcontents were largely silent, numerous wartime polls show that even after the events of early December 1941, many who had previously challenged the need for war with Germany were now sympathetic to an immediate, "honorable" resolution of the conflict. During 1942 such a settlement seemed obtainable through the frequently discussed possibility of negotiations with representatives of the German army. The popularity of such an arrangement was a matter of concern to the administration, which dealt with it much as it had responded to earlier isolationist plans. While peace sentiment produced no peace, the circumstances from which it arose and the government's reaction to it illuminate significant and neglected aspects of American participation in World War II.

About ten weeks after the Pearl Harbor attack and the German declaration of war on the United States, President Franklin D. Roosevelt received a confidential report based on polls prepared by Frederick Williams and Hadley Cantril of the Office of Opinion Research at Princeton University. Asked in January "whether they would favor accepting a peace offer made by Hitler on the basis of the status quo," 12 percent of the sample said that they would. When the question was changed to: "If the German Army overthrew Hitler and then offered to stop the war and discuss peace terms," the percentage rose to 30, indicating that, as the social psychologists observed, "a considerable

Richard W. Steele is professor of history in San Diego State University.

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minority of the public still fails to appreciate fully the driving forces in the war. . . .''[1]

Discussion of peace with representatives of a Hitler-free Germany might seem a laudable objective, but for a variety of reasons the Roosevelt government had decided against negotiations of any kind with any factions in Germany. Quite apart from the suspicion of insincerity that attached to any proposal emanating from German sources, Roosevelt was intent on not giving the Germans a pretext for reviving the ''stab in the back'' myth that grew out of the armistice of 1918. He was also determined to start with a relatively clean slate in arranging the political settlement in postwar Europe. Negotiating with the Germans would make a difficult problem infinitely more complex. Even the suggestion that the United States was open to negotiation would have an immediate, divisive effect on the Grand Alliance. If the Russians, for example, learned that the United States were considering peace with Germany, they might well seek their own arrangements. The competition and suspicion raised by negotiations, even if they included the Soviet Union, in effect ruled out talk of peace.[2]

During 1942 polling and analysis by Cantril, George Gallup, and the opinion experts of the government's Office of Facts and Figures (OFF) and its successor, the Office of War Information (OWI), established that about 30 percent of the public rejected the administration's no-compromise position. The core of this ''peace bloc'' consisted of a group of approximately 17 million Americans (about 20 percent of the adult population) identifiable by their adherence to a set of attitudes at odds with the administration's outlook on international affairs. These ''divisionists,'' as government opinion monitors called them, were distinguished from ''legitimate'' critics by their espousal of several themes that government experts had identified as indices of alienation from the administration and rejection of its war policies. Thus, divisionists were found to be more inclined than their fellow Americans to ''do business with Hitler,'' to abandon America's allies, to limit the war effort to a defense of the continental United States, and to think that Japan, rather than Germany, was America's real enemy. Other attitudes consistently associated with the divisionists were anti-communism, anti-Semitism, and the conviction that the President had maneuvered the

[1] Frederick Williams and Hadley Cantril, ''What People Think About Peace and the Role of the U.S. in the Postwar World,'' Feb. 14, 1942, report forwarded to Franklin D. Roosevelt by Lowell Mellett on Feb. 26, 1942. Official File (OF) 788, Franklin D. Roosevelt Papers (Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park).

[2] See Raymond G. O'Connor, *Diplomacy for Victory: FDR and Unconditional Surrender* (New York, 1971), 3–12.

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nation into war.[3] The polls also indicated that the divisionists were strikingly similar in numbers and attitudes to the isolationists of 1941 and showed no reluctance to identify themselves with prewar isolationist views. Cantril found this particularly significant in view of the intense propaganda favoring, and the prestige attached to, identification with the war effort. He concluded from this and other evidence that there had been no "profound conversion or change on [*sic*] conviction among pre–Pearl Harbor isolationists."[4]

Around this core of apparently irreconcilable opponents of administration policy was a variable group of other Americans, troubled or confused by current affairs, who gravitated to the pro-peace position as circumstances seemed to dictate. Although this "fellow-traveling" periphery of the peace bloc did not share the radically anti-government views of the divisionists, they were among the millions of Americans who remained uncertain about the objectives of the struggle against Germany and, hence, were reluctant to commit themselves to total war. During 1942 officials were aware that such doubts affected many loyal Americans, and that the strong sense of involvement associated with high morale was limited mainly to those actuated by feelings of revenge directed at the Japanese.[5] A series of humbling defeats at the hands of the "Japs" kept this hatred alive during the first weeks of 1942, but, even with regard to the Pacific war, the martial spirit was not as strong as circumstances seemed to warrant and could not obscure a certain passivity toward the war in general.[6]

[3] This analysis of the overall composition of the divisionists is from Bureau of Intelligence, Office of Facts and Figures (OFF), "Survey of Intelligence Materials," No. 8 (Feb. 2, 1942), No. 12 (March 2, 1942), and No. 19 (April 15, 1942), all of which were available to Franklin Roosevelt. President's Secretary's File (PSF) "OWI," Roosevelt Papers.

[4] Office of Public Opinion Research, "Pre-Pearl Harbor Interventionists and Non-Interventionists," Aug. 3, 1942, p. 3, "Interventionist Report" folder, Records of the Democratic National Committee (DNC) (Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park). This report was apparently prepared for DNC in connection with the November 1942 congressional election campaign: "pre-Pearl Harbor isolationist Congressional candidates will probably not find the going any harder back home than they did before December 7th. . . ." Peace with the German army was favored by 30 percent of those who had considered themselves interventionists before the war, and by 38 percent of the self-confessed pre-Pearl Harbor isolationists, according to a 1942 survey. *Ibid.*, 7.

[5] Bureau of Intelligence, OFF, "Survey of Intelligence Materials," No. 19 (April 15, 1942), PSF "OWI," Roosevelt Papers; Bureau of Intelligence, Office of War Information (OWI), "American Estimates of the Enemy," Sept. 2, 1942, entry 165, Records of the Office of Government Reports (OGR), RG 44 (National Archives).

[6] On concentrating on the Japanese, the question asked was: "Granting that it is important for us to fight the Axis every place we can, which do you think is more important for the United States to do right now: put most of our effort into fighting Japan or put most of our effort into fighting Germany?" 62 percent responded Japan, and 21 percent Germany. Bureau of Intelligence, OFF, "Survey of Intelligence Materials," No. 21 (April 29, 1942), PSF "OWI," Roosevelt Papers.

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By mid-February the shallowness of public commitment to the war had become a subject of national public discussion. To those who enthusiastically supported the administration's view of the war—and this included most of the nation's publicists and opinion leaders—America seemed indifferent.[7] The consensus was that after the initial shock of Pearl Harbor had worn off, the public had lapsed into complacency. Public officials, reporters, and other "informed observers" described Americans as "smug," "slothful," and "asleep." According to *Time*, while people did what they were called upon to do, "they showed little excitement about the war."[8]

Poor morale generated the most intense public discussion early in 1942, but the problem remained a matter of official concern throughout the year. For example, in September OWI reported that "few citizens are fully supporting the war effort. Most are content with the same comfortable ruts." The report said that not many Americans were convinced the military situation was critical or doubted eventual victory. Moreover, although most expected the war to last several years, few thought the struggle would entail great sacrifices. This and other analyses of morale noted a popular disposition to concentrate on the advantages accruing to various sectors of the populace and to conclude that others were exploiting the war for selfish advantage.[9]

[7] For some contemporary comments on the inadequacy of public attitudes see: Joseph W. Stilwell, *The Stilwell Papers*, ed. Theodore H. White (New York, 1948), 39; William D. Leahy, *I Was There: The Personal Story of the Chief of Staff to Presidents Roosevelt and Truman Based on His Notes and Diaries Made at the Time* (New York, 1950), 86; Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History* (New York, 1948), 491; Lewis H. Brereton, *The Brereton Diaries: The War in the Air in the Pacific, Middle East and Europe 3 October 1941–8 May 1945* (New York, 1946), 91; Fred L. Israel, ed., *The War Diary of Breckinridge Long: Selections from the Years 1939–1944* (Lincoln, Neb., 1966), 251; David E. Lilienthal, *The Journals of David E. Lilienthal, The TVA Years, 1939–1945: Including a Selection of Journal Entries from the 1917–1939 Period* (5 vols., New York, 1964), 449.

[8] On the media's consensus about complacency, see Bureau of Intelligence, OFF, "Weekly Media Digest," No. 3 (Feb. 19, 1942), entry 151, Records of the Office of Government Reports. For statements of public figures and analysis see: "The People: Smug, Slothful, Asleep?" *Time*, XXXIX (Feb. 16, 1942), 11, and "The Nation's Worst Week," *ibid.* (Feb. 23, 1942), 13. For analysis of the malaise, see Arthur Krock, "Public Slow to Grasp Spirit of War Urgency," New York *Times*, Feb. 8, 1942.

[9] Special Services Division, Bureau of Intelligence, OWI, "Attitudes Obstructing the War Effort," Report No. 21, Sept. 1, 1942 (revised), entry 171, Records of the Office of Government Reports. Special Gallup poll on voluntary compliance cited in Harold L. Ickes Manuscript Diary, 7517, Harold L. Ickes Papers, Library of Congress. Poor morale as a result of alleged inequality of sacrifice is discussed in the Acting State Director (OGR) for Maine. "Special Report on Shipyard Situation, South Portland, Maine," April 30, 1942, "U.S. Maritime Commission" folder, Lowell Mellett Papers (Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park). Other subjective evidence of "low morale," including violations of Office of Price Administration (OPA) regulations (as high as 66 percent in Washington gas stations and New York retail stores), are listed in "Morale," memo from G. S. Pettee to R. Keith Kane, Feb. 3, 1943, "Sources—Morale Feb. 3, 1943" folder, entry 171, Records of the Office of Government Reports.

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Complaints concerning poor morale, apathy, and complacency may tell more about the complainants than of public attitudes. They certainly reflect, at least to some extent, the overblown expectations of the hundred-percenters; observations of would-be morale builders are justly suspect. In fact, dissidence in World War II, though probably manifest in millions of individual, unrecorded acts, is not reliably ascertainable without recourse to public opinion polls. Fortunately, polls there were—in great numbers, scientifically conducted, and carefully analyzed.[10]

While the polls did not measure the intensity of public feelings, they did indicate that large numbers beyond the divisionist 20 percent expressed hostility or uncertainty about important aspects of administration war policy. Above all, they revealed a significant lack of understanding of the issues at stake. After six months of American involvement, 53 percent of the American people admitted they did not have a clear idea of what the war was about. By August, continuous propaganda had increased "understanding," or, at least, the percentage able to repeat the official slogans, to 60 percent. Nevertheless, some of the responses collected by the Gallup organization reflected not only confusion, but also positive rejection of the administration's image of the war: "I can see why we are fighting the Japanese, but I can't see why we are fighting the Germans." "We are fighting to save Great Britain in the East." "I suppose we are fighting for democracy. Actually I think we are fighting because a bunch of guys want to make millions." "This is a war of the 'haves' against the 'have nots.' We are fighting for the 'haves,' and for nothing." "We are fighting for freedom of the seas." Or, "We are fighting to protect ourselves, but the whole thing seems so unnecessary."[11] Such reports led officials in OWI to conclude that "uncertainty as to the scope and character of our war aims and . . . misunderstanding or underestimation of the Axis conspiracy" had produced "a large measure of confusion . . . in the minds of the American people respecting the nature and magnitude of the war. . . ."[12] Clearly, for those who could not say "why we fight" or

[10] The nature of the polls and other sources of information on public opinion available to Franklin Roosevelt is discussed in Richard W. Steele, "The Pulse of the People. Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Gauging of American Public Opinion," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 9 (Oct. 1974), 195–216.

[11] On public understanding of the war, see Williams and Cantril, "What People Think About Peace and the Role of the U.S. in the Postwar World"; Hadley Cantril, John Harding, Donald Rugg, and Frederick Williams, "The Nature of the Enemy," Aug. 13, 1942, entry 171, Records of the Office of Government Reports; and American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), "Analysis of American Opinion on the War," Sept. 10, 1942, President's Personal File (PPF) 4721, Roosevelt Papers.

[12] Bureau of Intelligence, OWI, "American Estimates of the Enemy," Sept. 2, 1942, entry 165, Records of the Office of Government Reports.

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who harbored dark suspicions concerning the origins and purposes of the war, a no-compromise policy held little appeal.

For most of 1942 the nature of America's role in the war did little to counteract popular receptivity to an immediate settlement with Germany. During this period, Americans suffered from a condition resembling the "phony-war" malaise that afflicted France and Britain in the months preceding Germany's spring offensive in 1940. The struggle had a certain unreal quality, compounded of the remoteness of the fighting, the fact that few Americans were initially involved, and the government's policy of playing down losses for fear of undermining confidence in the military leadership.[13] It probably appeared to many Americans that Germany was at war only with America's newly acquired and not overly trusted allies. Apart from the efforts of the propagandists, the image of the European war was dominated by the bloodletting on the eastern front, and the tug-of-war between the British and Erwin Rommel in the western desert. The result was that, for many Americans, until United States forces landed in North Africa in November, World War II was almost totally encompassed by the conflict with Japan. Beyond this it is probably fair to say that the war meant little more than a new job, money in the bank, a few inconveniences, and possibly a boy in the service. This perception was reflected in a mid-March national sampling that found that despite (or perhaps because of) the critical situation in the Far East, 34 percent of the public wanted the army and navy kept close to home to defend the Western Hemisphere. Only 50 percent thought they should be sent abroad to meet the enemy at distant points.[14]

Other circumstances contributed to the sympathy for negotiations with Germany. Since the rise of Adolf Hitler, the American public had been subjected to a constant stream of stories from Nazi and anti-Nazi elements, which had identified the "New Germany" with the Führer. Newsreels, motion pictures, short-wave broadcasts, and news reports from or about Germany made Hitler the personification of the Reich, and many Americans, apparently including most public officials, tended to see Germany's malfeasance as the product of Hitler's malevolence. Thus, in August 1941, Gallup noted that the reason most frequently

[13] See Edward S. Corwin, *Total War and the Constitution* (Freeport, N.Y., 1970), 108. The policy was defended as necessary to withhold military information (U.S. losses) from the enemy. See Roosevelt to Elmer Davis and Byron Price, August 25, 1942, PSF "B. Price," Roosevelt Papers; and correspondence between Harry Hopkins and Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox, February 27, 1942–March 26, 1942, in "OWI" folder, Harry L. Hopkins Papers (Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park).

[14] Hadley Cantril, "Opinions Concerning Offensive and Defensive Strategy," entry 171, Records of the Office of Government Reports.

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given for opposing a peace in Europe was the impossibility of doing business with Hitler. Goals more in line with the administration's outlook—the need to destroy Germany's power, to rebuke the aggressors, to construct a peace in Europe along the lines recently set forth in the Atlantic Charter—were not echoed by the "man in the street."[15]

Involvement of the United States in the war did little to alter the public's perception of Germany. Asked in March to select from among a number of statements describing the relationship between the German people and the belligerent actions of the German state, 42 percent of the American people thought that Germans were just like other people, and, given an opportunity to choose their own leaders, would become good world citizens. Two Americans in three thought that if given a choice, Germans would reject the kind of government they currently had.[16]

The distinction commonly made between Germany and its Nazi leaders was unwittingly cultivated by government officials from the President down. In warning the American people against the dangers of a negotiated peace in a 1941 address, the President noted that such an arrangement would be a "gift to Nazism" to take a breath preparatory to resuming its war for world domination; and when Roosevelt and others referred to the Allied decision to concentrate on the European theater, the plan was naturally called "Hitler-first."[17] The American media also tended to distinguish between the German army and the Nazis, identifying the former with the relatively benign traditional Germany, and the latter with the Third Reich's malignant fanaticism. Propagandists worried that "so much has been made of the conflicts between the Germany Army and the Party . . . that the old officer corps may have acquired the undeserved reputation of being strongly anti-Nazi and worthy of trust and collaboration."[18]

[15] The question asked was: If Germany were to offer peace on the basis that she would keep only the territory won from Russia and give up the other conquered territories, would you favor such a peace. 34 percent favored acceptance. George Gallup, "Voters Opposed to a Hitler 'Peace,' " New York *Times*, Aug. 31, 1941.

[16] In contrast, 41 percent believed the Japanese to be inevitably warlike and to want the kind of government they had. National Opinion Research Center, "Report of a Nationwide Survey," March 1942 (UCLA Library). Only 21 percent believed the Germans inevitably warlike, while another 30 percent conceded they were too easily led into war by their leaders.

[17] Samuel I. Rosenman, ed., *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt* (13 vols., New York, 1950), X, 334. The dichotomy reflected the President's own thinking as apparent in his private talk. For example, see Samuel I. Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt* (New York, 1952), 308. Other examples are noted in "Authoritative Statements," enclosed in Leo Rosten to Mellett, June 30, 1942, "OWI-OGR-Mellett-Rosten, 1940–42" folder, entry 78, Records of the Office of Government Reports.

[18] Enemy Sources Section, Sources Division, Bureau of Intelligence, OWI, "The Nature of the Enemy," Dec. 21, 1942, "Nature of the Enemy" folder, entry 171, Records of the Office of Government Reports.

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OWI attempted to correct the erroneous, and at least potentially harmful, image fostered by official statements, but for 1942 the pattern of public thinking was set. Studies showed that three out of four Americans saw the German government, rather than the German people, as America's real enemy. Three in ten thought the German generals and army were not loyal to Hitler.[19] The implication of these attitudes was clear. If German excesses were the products of Nazism and did not enjoy the support of either the German people or the army, the exploration of peace with "responsible" anti-Nazis made good sense. Such a peace could be expected to provide adequate guarantees of American security, putting to rest the fears of those Americans who saw the war as simply a defensive response to Nazi aggression. Without Hitler's grand designs there would have been no war. Should his successors renounce those ambitions, hostilities might end. War had come by declaration. Until it became real, it might be concluded the same way.

Given the sympathetic public response to prospects of negotiations, peace maneuvers either genuinely or spuriously originating with non-Nazi sources posed a serious threat to American and Allied unity. Indeed, American officials thought that a German propaganda campaign using the negotiated peace theme awaited only the proper moment.[20] The danger was especially great when stalemate on the battlefront might give rise to talk of peace. Such a time came in late December 1941—a period following the inconclusive end of the German drive on Moscow. Two weeks after the Pearl Harbor attack, intelligence chief William Donovan sent Roosevelt a report written by historian John Wheeler-Bennett for the Office of the Coordinator of Information (the forerunner of the Office of Strategic Services and the Central Intelligence Agency). Wheeler-Bennett predicted that if the current German offensive ended in stalemate, the Nazis would launch a peace offensive against the West, exploiting Western hopes of a schism between the army and the party—a strategy he called the "most sinister and dangerous" weapon in the Nazi armory of propaganda. Roosevelt,

[19] Bureau of Intelligence, OWI, "American Estimates of the Enemy," Sept. 2, 1942, *ibid.* As with all polls, results varied from one time to another. Thus, in response to an American Institute of Public Opinion (AIPO) question, "In our war with Germany do you feel that our chief enemy is the German people as a whole, or the German government?" the percentage answering "government" as opposed to "people" or "both" or "no opinion" was: May 1942—78 percent, June—74 percent, November—67 percent. "Public Opinion on International Relations and Reconstruction," entry 171, Records of the Office of Government Reports.

[20] Joint Committee on Information Policy (JCIP) on Peace Offensive, "Enemy Talk Offensives," Dec. 28, 1942, in Archibald MacLeish for Elmer Davis et al., Jan. 14, 1943, "Agenda and Minutes, JCIP," entry 6, Records of the Office of War Information, RG 208 (Federal Records Center, Suitland, Md.)

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apparently impressed, asked Donovan to arrange for an unofficial exposé of the scheme.[21]

About the time Roosevelt read Wheeler-Bennett's warning, the American public was put on notice that "responsible" Germans were indeed about to seize the Reich. In a nationwide broadcast in December, the popular news commentator H. V. Kaltenborn, much to the chagrin of army censors and National Broadcasting Company officials, dramatically informed his radio audience that Hitler's recent assumption of the post of Commander-in-Chief of the Army (December 19, 1941) was the "first break" between the German military and the Nazi leadership—a rupture, Kaltenborn declared, that would end in the overthrow of the Hitler regime.[22] Similar reports came to Roosevelt through diplomatic channels. Early in January, Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles reported that a group of Germans, allegedly representing elements of the Nazi party and the army, were attempting to determine whether the United States was interested in opening negotiations for peace; and, in mid-February, the President learned from a "highly placed reliable German source" that disagreements between the German generals and Hitler were intensifying. Axis peace feelers were rebuffed and discouraged.[23]

During 1942 Roosevelt repeatedly asserted American refusal to negotiate, climaxing a series of such declarations with the promulgation of the "Unconditional Surrender" doctrine at the Casablanca Conference in January 1943.[24] His rationale, as he explained it in his 1942 State of the Union address, was that "No compromise can end . . . [this] conflict. There never has been—there never can be—successful com-

[21] "Peace Offensive," memo forwarded to Franklin Roosevelt by William Donovan, Dec. 19, 1941, Franklin Roosevelt for Donovan, Dec. 22, 1941, PSF "OSS," Roosevelt Papers.

[22] H. V. Kaltenborn's remarks and the reaction of the war department and NBC are found in "Kaltenborn, H. V. May [*sic*] 1941" folder, National Broadcasting Company Papers (Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison).

[23] Memo of conversation by Sumner Welles, Jan. 3, 1942, PSF "Welles," Roosevelt Papers; Anthony Drexel Biddle to President, Feb. 16, 1942, PSF "A. Biddle, Jr.," *ibid.* Welles responded to the peace feelers by indicating that the United States was not interested in any peace proposals and that the President had officially announced that the American objective was the complete and final destruction of Hitlerism. See memo by Welles, Jan. 3, 1942, PSF "Welles," *ibid.*

[24] Rosenman, *Public Papers of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, X, 334; report dated June 25, 1942 in "Rosten" folder and "Authoritative Statements," June 30, 1942, "OWI-OGR-Mellett-Rosten, 1940–42" folder, entry 78, Records of the Office of Government Reports. In January 1942 the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union, among others, committed themselves in the Declaration of the United Nations not to conclude a separate peace with Germany. See Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers, 1942* (6 vols., Washington, 1960), I, 25–26. The Unconditional Surrender statement is found in Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: The Conferences at Washington, 1941–1942, and Casablanca, 1943* (Washington, 1968), 726–31.

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promise between good and evil. Only total victory can reward the champions of tolerance, and decency, and freedom, and faith.''[25] Lest there be any misunderstanding of American intentions, the administration circulated the same message in diplomatic channels. In September, with rumors of possible negotiations at a new peak, the President cautioned the papacy against undertaking the role of peacemaker. In a revealing exposition delivered by the President's representative, Myron Taylor, the administration repeated its unalterable opposition to negotiation. The United States had learned, Taylor's statement noted, ''that cunningly timed and craftily planned peace proposals may be used by faithless aggressors as instruments of war,'' and he warned the pope that those who lent themselves to such schemes ''would inevitably weaken [their] moral influence.''[26]

Nevertheless, rumors of impending peace circulated throughout 1942,[27] and propaganda analysts scrutinizing official Axis statements and short-wave broadcasts were never at a loss for convincing evidence that a ''peace offensive'' was in the making. Beginning in mid-March a German station, ''Radio Debunk,'' began devoting a considerable portion of its American broadcasts to suggesting ''that the American people. . . . bring pressure upon the government to withdraw from the war.'' About the same time, reports received by OFF indicated that the peace line was being echoed by ''former isolationists and their German-American pro-Nazi accomplices in the Middle West.''[28] In March the press reported that William J. Grace, a prominent prewar isolationist and former head of the Citizens Keep America Out of War Committee, had publicly advocated ''a conference now among the heads of the warring nations for the purpose of bringing about an honorable and equitable settlement.''[29] Statements of this kind were not common, but, together with the known susceptibility of many Americans, they led sociologist E. A. Shils, then associated with OFF, to warn that the ''agitation for a negotiated peace is going to gain in strength throughout the present year—i.e., until United States military power develops sufficiently to stop the Japanese and go on the offensive.'' In the meantime, Shils thought, the ''depression and anxiety'' occasioned by

[25] See Rosenman, *Public Papers . . . of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, XI, 39–41.

[26] Statement dated Sept. 19, 1942, PSF ''Myron Taylor,'' Roosevelt Papers.

[27] For example, Bern to Department of State, March 25, 1942, 740.0011EW1939/1945, Records of the Department of State, RG 59 (National Archives); Moscow to Department of State, May 5, 1942, 740.0011EW1939/21437, *ibid.*

[28] G. Almond to J. A. Swords, April 17, 1942, ''4-17-42 German Peace Offensive'' folder, entry 155, Records of the Office of Government Reports.

[29] ''Isolationists Renew Drive—'Immediate Peace' Urged,'' *Christian Science Monitor*, March 2, 1942.

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the inevitable military setbacks will be "grist for the Nazi mill which is trying to grind out a desire for a negotiated peace in this country."[30] Roosevelt was keenly aware of this troublesome potential, suspecting for some time that his enemies were plotting to use the peace issue against him. During the first winter of the war in Europe, at least two Americans had unofficially undertaken to sound out German leaders on the prospects for peace. Their efforts were fruitless, but they helped convince the President that talk of compromise posed a real threat to administration hopes of thwarting Nazi ambitions.[31] Roosevelt was also aware of extensive contacts between German agents and opposition politicians,[32] and, by November 1940, had come to believe, as he told Samuel Rosenman, that "too many GOP leaders favored the appeasement of Hitler."[33]

The coming of war to America changed but did not destroy the peace issue. Many of those who had stubbornly resisted involvement now hoped to terminate it as quickly as possible, and apparently only a lack of organization significantly differentiated sentiment for a negotiated peace from the isolationism of 1941. Moreover, as the President quickly learned, the leadership for an effective negotiated peace movement seemed likely to emerge from the die-hard remnants of the America

[30] E. A. Shils to Kane, "Memorandum on Meeting the Agitation for a Negotiated Peace," March 4, 1942, "Shils Memos" folder, entry 154, Records of the Office of Government Reports. Other predictions of an imminent "peace offensive" are in Special Services Division, Bureau of Intelligence, OFF, "Isolationist Aims, Arguments and Organization," April 7, 1942, entry 171, *ibid.*; Alan Barth, "Peace Offensive, Divisionists, War Aims," April 18, 1942, *ibid.*; and address by MacLeish to the Associated Press Annual Luncheon, April 20, 1942, *ibid.*

[31] The missions were undertaken by James D. Mooney and William R. Davis. Mooney's experiences are discussed in his unpublished memoirs. James D. Mooney, "Memoirs of James D. Mooney" (1946), box 54, Louis P. Lochner Papers (Wisconsin State Historical Society). See also letters, Mooney to Franklin Roosevelt, July 1, 1940, and Franklin Roosevelt to Basil O'Connor, June 27, 1940, PSF-Subject File "Basil O'Connor," Roosevelt Papers. For report on William R. Davis' activities, see J. Edgar Hoover to Marvin H. McIntyre, Sept. 14, 1938 and attachments, PSF "Justice Dept., 1938–45," Roosevelt Papers; see also Beatrice Bishop Berle and Travis Beal Jacobs, eds., *Navigating the Rapids, 1918–1971: From the Papers of Adolf A. Berle* (New York, 1973), 256–57; and O. John Rogge, *The Official German Report: Nazi Penetration, 1924–1942; Pan-Arabism, 1939–Today* (New York, 1961), 238–58.

[32] The story of German contacts among American politicians is told in Ladislas Farago, *The Game of the Foxes: The Untold Story of German Espionage in the United States and Great Britain During World War II* (New York, 1971), 366–89. The report of Republican campaign money going for espionage and propaganda is based on a memo by treasury official Charles Schwarz, based on his talk with John Metcalf (probably United States attorney). Memo of discussion forwarded by Stephen T. Early to Attorney General, June 4, 1940, found in "SC-misc." folder, Early Correspondence, Stephen T. Early Papers (Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park). See also Klause for Henry Morgenthau, Jan. 6, 21, 1941 (digests of FBI reports in "Morgenthau Diary," book 355, pp. 132, 320), Henry Morgenthau Papers (Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park). See also note on similar activity by former Ambassador John Cudahy in memo, Adolf Berle for Franklin Roosevelt, Feb. 20, 1941, OF 548, Roosevelt Papers.

[33] Franklin Roosevelt to Samuel I. Rosenman, Nov. 13, 1940, PPF 64, Roosevelt Papers.

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First Committee, particularly in the person of the isolationist national hero, Charles A. Lindbergh.

America First officially disbanded in February, and many of its officials announced their support for the war effort. Nevertheless, the activities of some members, including Lindbergh, remained the subject of government interest and concern. In mid-February Federal Bureau of Investigation Director J. Edgar Hoover informed the President that former members of the Committee had "gone underground" and were "biding their time," awaiting the opportunity to emerge again as a "political force." Hoover cited as evidence a mid-December meeting at which the renowned flyer had allegedly held forth on the yellow and Bolshevik menaces, on the foolishness of the current war in Europe, and on what might be done to reverse American policy. According to Hoover's informant, Lindbergh declared that "when the American people, by reason of the lists of the missing and the statements of war losses, realize that they have been betrayed by the British and the Administration," the Committee should be ready to "advocate a negotiated peace." Hoover also noted that he had obtained information from other sources to the effect that the America Firsters had a "secret mailing list of 8,476,000"; that lately a "great many individuals among foreign speaking groups have been circularized"; and that the leaders of the underground organization planned to hold a "series of house parties . . . to keep alive contacts."[34]

The idea of an underground network drawing anti-administration elements into a new peace coalition was kept before the President by the FBI. In March, Hoover, with the attorney general's approval, assigned "preferential investigative status" to an inquiry for ascertaining whether the structure of America First was now being "used by foreign interests, or by individuals cooperating with foreign interests, in such a manner as to interfere with the national defense effort."[35]

Such investigations very likely failed to establish the sought-after links, and, in spite of the President's conviction that Lindbergh was a "Nazi," the man cast as America's first Führer failed to fill the assigned role. Lesser figures like William Dudley Pelley and Joseph

[34] See Hoover to presidential aide Edwin M. Watson, Feb. 13, 1942. Attached to this letter is a long report recounting a variety of unverified accounts of America First activities over the past year. Document supplied by FBI, no file designation provided. Charles A. Lindbergh in his diary gives a different version of the events at the meeting and categorically denies the remarks ascribed to him. See *The Wartime Journals of Charles A. Lindbergh* (New York, 1970), 568, 587, 598.

[35] See Hoover to Watson, June 8, 1942, and Hoover to Special Agents in charge of field offices, March 16, 1942, supplied by FBI.

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McWilliams were arrested and tried for sedition. Others like Gerald L. K. Smith remained under careful surveillance by the FBI. Government action, whether it ended in conviction of the seditionists or not, served to keep most of the administration's extreme foreign policy critics occupied and powerless throughout the war.[36]

Nevertheless, the President could not rest easy, for the fate of the extremists notwithstanding, he had reason to ponder the possibility that his more respectable political enemies might use the peace issue to unsettle and embarrass the administration. In April OFF warned that in the fall congressional campaigns "subversion will probably be intermingled with politics" as both administration opponents and Nazi propagandists seek to "promote defeatism or play upon the war weariness of the people." Fleshing out this prediction was a report informing the President that three leading isolationist Republicans, Congressman Joe Martin, former Congressman Bruce Barton, and publisher Roy Howard, had "just held a secret meeting in far off Tucson," leading to speculation that they were planning an "isolationist attack" against administration war policies. A more explicit warning came to Roosevelt from a friend, New Dealer Gardiner Jackson, who told him in the fall of 1942 that the business interests behind the presidential candidacy of Thomas E. Dewey were working hard for a negotiated peace and had taken a recent conciliatory speech by Hitler as the "opening gun of the drive to call the war off. . . ." The problem raised by these reports (if true) was, as OFF warned, that even if the agitation of the peace issue could not force the administration into negotiations, it could do "much damage" by strengthening "the hand of those in Congress whose main goal is the harassment and obstruction of the President."[37]

From this perspective perhaps the greatest threat to administration war policy came from a small but powerful group of isolationist

[36] For the "Nazi" remark, see Wayne S. Cole, *Charles A. Lindbergh and the Battle Against American Intervention in World War II* (New York, 1974), 128. For Lindbergh's wartime activities, see *Wartime Journals of Charles A. Lindbergh*. These reveal no hint of plans for a revival of anti-administration or anti-war movement. For Roosevelt's interest, see memo, Francis Biddle to Franklin Roosevelt, June 2, 1943, alluding to two requests by the President for information on Gerald L. K. Smith, Joseph McWilliams, and their activities. In PSF "Justice—Biddle," Roosevelt Papers. An account of the government actions against the alleged seditionists is in Francis Biddle, *In Brief Authority* (Garden City, 1962), 233–51.

[37] Bureau of Intelligence, OFF, "Survey of Intelligence Materials," No. 18 (April 8, 1942), PSF "OWI," Roosevelt Papers. On March 13, 1942, Franklin Roosevelt asked David Niles to check on the Tucson meeting; memo, Niles to Eleanor Roosevelt, no date, OF 856, *ibid.* Gardiner Jackson to Franklin Roosevelt, Oct. 2, 1942, in PSF-Subject File "General Corresp," *ibid.* Special Services Division, Bureau of Intelligence, OFF, "Isolationist Aims, Arguments and Organization," April 7, 1942, entry 171, Records of the Office of Government Reports.

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newspapers. Roosevelt believed that Col. Robert R. McCormick of the Chicago *Tribune*, Joseph Patterson of the New York *Daily News*, his sister, Eleanor "Cissy" Patterson, of the Washington *Times-Herald*, and William R. Hearst were doing their best to "instill disunity in the country," and some of them, he wrote privately, "still want a negotiated peace."[38] Although Roosevelt felt that public attitudes were "basically sound," recent events had given him ample reason to believe that the people could be misled by the agitation of false issues. He had merely to recall the "irrational" fears raised by his critics during the Court-packing controversy and during the prewar debate over American foreign policy. Experience had also convinced him that his domestic enemies would stop at nothing in their effort to discredit him, even if this meant undermining the national interest. Roosevelt almost certainly saw the agitation of the peace issue in this light, and saw silencing the divisionist leaders as both a source of personal satisfaction and a service to the nation.

Although anxious to strike directly at his antagonists, Roosevelt had to proceed circumspectly. The divisionist press was powerful and popular, and would certainly use efforts against it as proof of the administration's dictatorial proclivities. At the same time, a scrupulous attorney general, Francis Biddle, reluctant to infringe on freedom of the press, was slow to lend his agency to the President's purposes.[39] Roosevelt nevertheless pressed his timid chief law officer for action with the injunction "that an offensive is always better than a defensive."[40] In May, noting the similarity between Axis propaganda and material appearing in divisionist papers, Roosevelt urged the justice department to find evidence of the link. The results of the investigation, he said, would lay the basis for criminal action against the papers and provide material for "the kind of publicity that . . . will, in effect, let the whole country know the truth about these papers."[41] The investigations did not establish the desired link and the President was obliged to hold off on legal action until the divisionist publishers clearly overstepped themselves.

The divisionist press soon offered an opening. In June the Chicago

[38] Elliott Roosevelt and Joseph P. Lash, eds., *F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, 1928–1945* (2 vols., New York, 1950), II, 1298. See also Francis L. Loewenheim, Harold D. Langley, and Manfred Jonas, eds., *Roosevelt and Churchill: Their Secret Wartime Correspondence* (New York, 1975), 194–95.

[39] See Hoover's complaint in memo, Early for Franklin Roosevelt, March 20, 1942, PSF "Justice," Roosevelt Papers.

[40] Memo, Franklin Roosevelt for Francis Biddle, March 24, 1942, OF 144, *ibid.*

[41] May 7, 1942, OF 4453, *ibid.*

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Tribune, New York *Daily News*, and Washington *Times-Herald* published an account of the Battle of Midway that the government said revealed confidential information. Roosevelt immediately sought a grand jury investigation into the affair, and selected William D. Mitchell, attorney general in the Hoover administration, as special prosecutor. The *Tribune*'s defenders labeled the action as the latest installment of a longstanding administration "purge and smear campaign" directed against the paper and the isolationist members of Congress. In late August, however, the grand jury refused to indict, dampening administration enthusiasm for "getting" the divisionist press in the courts.[42] The government did succeed in pressuring or prosecuting out of existence dozens of overtly seditious publications, but little more was done to silence the potentially more destructive handful who palely reflected their point of view.[43] Apart from reiterating the administration's determination not to parley, Roosevelt could do little directly to head off talk of negotiated peace.

Administration propagandists were also severely limited. Ideological divisions within the American propaganda establishment and the President's refusal to arbitrate differences or provide decisive guidance made it difficult for the government to address the problem consistently or directly.[44] More important, Roosevelt knew that Americans were fundamentally divided over a good many social and political issues, not the least of which was the role of the United States in world affairs. It was not possible to speak unambiguously on many war issues without exposing and exacerbating profound ideological differences that lay just beneath the surface. For most Americans the dangerous men and organizations in America were not Hearst or McCormick or the various "fascist" groups that the government was then seeking to destroy. Rather, they were John L. Lewis and members of organized labor, who, many felt, were profiting from the war.[45]

[42] New York *Times*, Aug. 8, 11, 20, 1942.

[43] "One thing the President is interested in and that is the seditious and subversive newspapers of the country. He presses Biddle on the subject at every Cabinet meeting. . . ." Ickes Manuscript Diary, April 11, 1942. Following a White House meeting, Francis Biddle announced that he would seek indictments against publications such as *Social Justice* for violation of the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, the Espionage Act of 1917, and other laws. New York *Times*, April 23, 1942.

[44] See Sydney Weinberg, "What to Tell America: The Writers' Quarrel in the Office of War Information," *Journal of American History*, LV (June 1968), 73–89.

[45] The difficulty encountered by administration spokesmen who "talked sense" to the American people on liberal themes is illustrated by the public reaction to one speech by Henry Wallace. In 1943, Wallace warned that there was a "group of dangerous native fascists in this country." A poll taken in November 1943 asked people whether they believed this to be so and found that less than 46 percent said it was. On the other hand, asked whether there were any prominent

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A candid discussion of the Nazi regime designed to educate Americans to the stark contrasts between the German and American systems might well fall short of the hoped-for result. Anti-democratic, potentially "fascist" attitudes infected a considerable portion of the American population. Polls revealed that more than half of those who expressed an opinion thought Jews in the United States had too much power, and about 20 percent thought Hitler's racial policy was justified. On this touchstone of fascism, at least, little distinguished the attitudes of a good many Americans from those of their enemies.[46] Those who cast the war in terms of the free world versus the slave ran into difficulty justifying America's partnership with the Soviet Union. To the large number of people who knew something of the Stalinist regime, or who harbored an abiding hatred of all things communist, the supposed contrast was unconvincing.

If the concept of a struggle between good and evil could not bear close scrutiny, the suggestion that the war would make the world a better place evoked howls of derision and strident protest. Though the administration was urged by liberal internationalists to take a stand on the deeper issues of the war,[47] few officials apart from Vice-President Henry Wallace spoke out, and none of them in specifics. Such talk would alienate voters of a dozen ethnic and religious affiliations and supply Republican orators with the stuff for a thousand speeches. Discussion of the positive objectives of the war might have provided some inspiration for those inclined to the administration's reformist-internationalist outlook, but for the Hearst-McCormick-Patterson press and the millions of people who shared its views, such talk was merely provocative. "Globaloney," Republican Congresswoman Clare Boothe Luce called it, providing anti-administration forces with a rallying cry that lasted through the end of the war.[48]

individuals who might be harmful to the nation unless curbed, 52.4 percent said yes, and of these 70.6 percent named John L. Lewis. Next in unpopularity were Franklin Roosevelt and Wallace with about 5.5 percent each. 58.5 percent thought that there were dangerous groups in need of curbing, and of these 53 percent named labor unions. Communists and Nazi organizations came in second and third with 16 percent and 15 percent respectively. Negroes and Jews followed with 8.6 percent and 7.7 percent. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 7 (Winter 1943), 757–58.

[46] The American perception of the world's racial hierarchy, though probably not as intensely felt by Americans as by Germans, was otherwise not dissimilar. As George Gallup noted: "German ideas of racial superiority find their counterpart in our own theories of racial and cultural superiority. . . ." See Gallup, "Analysis of American Opinion on the War," PPF 4721, Roosevelt Papers.

[47] See, for examples, Hadley Cantril to Franklin Roosevelt, Sept. 14, 1942, OF 857, *ibid.*; Isador Lubin to Harry Hopkins, Nov. 10, 1942, "Lubin" folder, box 99, Harry L. Hopkins Papers (Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park); F. R. Von Windegger to Franklin Roosevelt, Feb. 12, Sept. 1, 1943, PPF 7213, *ibid.*

[48] Eleanor Patterson's Washington *Times-Herald* set the tone. The plans of "our world savers," the paper declared, were even more ambitious this time than they were after World War I: "a

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Part of the problem was that the results of World War I left many Americans skeptical of the idealism propounded by their political leaders. Realizing this, Roosevelt consciously tried to dissociate the current conflict from the last. In April 1942 he asked the public for an alternative to the name "World War II," indicating that he preferred "War of Survival." Surely here was a war aim to which all Americans could subscribe. Unfortunately, as propagandists pointed out, the slogan sounded defeatist at a time when the Allies were suffering many defeats and unrealistic to a people who never doubted ultimate victory. It played into the hands of those who would negotiate a settlement of the war, since German peace offers would undoubtedly guarantee American security. The phrase was quickly dropped.[49]

The use of hate as a morale-builder was also discussed in cabinet meetings, but the President showed no enthusiasm for it. World War I dealt a severe blow not only to idealism but to the credibility of the atrocity story and the whole hate-thy-enemy theme, and the administration would only use these devices cautiously.[50]

Roosevelt suffered no illusions about national unity. He was well informed and perhaps even more alive to the political meaning of public attitudes than the professional analysts. Although aware of the continuing attractiveness of isolationism and of the unregeneracy of the anti-Roosevelt forces, he could do little of immediate consequence about it. In the long run, the prospects of neutralizing the divisionists were a good deal better. Time was on the President's side. The failure of the Axis to achieve decisive victories in 1942 virtually ensured the ultimate triumph of the Allies. As victory came to appear increasingly certain, the allure of a negotiated peace was bound to decline.[51] But with the

quart of milk a day . . . guaranteeing everybody freedom of expression and religion and freedom from want and fear . . . while they let hordes of 'post-war paupers' move into the United States from everywhere in the world." "America First," Washington *Times-Herald*, July 5, 1942.

[49] As late as November 1939, 68 percent of all adults thought American participation in World War I was a mistake, and in the fall of 1942, one-third of the population still believed that. Gallup, "Analysis of American Opinion on the War," PPF 4721, Roosevelt Papers. The defects of "War of Survival" were discussed by MacLeish in a memo for Rosenman, April 21, 1942, "White House Memos" folder, Samuel I. Rosenman Papers (Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park).

[50] Ickes Manuscript Diary, 6537. OFF explained that Americans had built up a "very strong immunization against the inflammatory effect of reports of barbarities. . . ." Committee of War Information, Agenda of Meeting, May 12, 1942, attachment "B," "Pros and Cons on Hate and Atrocities," entry 78, Records of the Office of Government Reports.

[51] "American opinion has been extremely responsive to news from fighting fronts, and on many issues has fluctuated sharply with the military reports of the moment." OWI, "Trends in American Opinion Since Pearl Harbor," Sept. 11, 1942, PSF "OWI," Roosevelt Papers. Press comment on the North African invasion "left no doubt that the offensive is at last fully underway and the Allies . . . on the highroad toward final victory." OWI, "Intelligence Report," No. 40, (Nov. 13, 1942), *ibid.*

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unmatched sensitivity to public opinion that characterized his presidency, Roosevelt did not leave the development of attitudes solely to chance. Within weeks of the Pearl Harbor attack he set in motion preparations for the first American offensive action against Germany, noting that he considered it "very important to morale to give this country a feeling that they [*sic*] are in the war"—something the President believed could be achieved by involving American troops "in active fighting across the Atlantic" in 1942.[52]

With offensive action in the offing, interest in the European war picked up, and the "phony war" attitude diminished. After the African invasion in November 1942, the fighting against Germany assumed, for the public at least, a steady, victorious pace. News from the front was almost invariably good, unsullied by reports of exorbitant losses or excessively realistic depictions of combat. The military, with the President's approval and the almost total collaboration of the press, presented the struggle with appropriate tones of glory and triumph. Casualty figures were selectively suppressed or released to spare the public's sensibilities or to stir its interest;[53] and, while Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson urged the Signal Corps to risk more lives to obtain combat footage to show the folks back home, the more ghastly scenes in such films were removed to spare Americans the more unpleasant aspects of war.[54] The effect was to revive the almost lost illusion of war

[52] The President's desire for immediate offensive action was to produce the invasion of North Africa in November 1942. The origins of this scheme are discussed in Richard W. Steele, *The First Offensive, 1942: Roosevelt, Marshall and the Making of American Strategy* (Bloomington, Ind., 1973), 58.

[53] For a discussion of the selective release of information, see "A History of the Office of Censorship" (2 vols.), II, "Press and Broadcasting Divisions," 16–29, Records of the Office of Censorship, RG 216 (National Archives). The collaboration of the press in suppressing the real and playing up the superficial and heroic is discussed by Phillip Knightley, *The First Casualty: From the Crimea to Vietnam: The War Correspondent as Hero, Propagandist, and Myth Maker* (New York, 1975), 269–333. The President's sensitivity to the publication of "bad news" is suggested in his instructions to the directors of OWI and the Office of Censorship in regard to the reporting of war-related accidents. See Franklin Roosevelt for Elmer Davis and Byron Price, Aug. 25, 1942, PSF "OWI," Roosevelt Papers. For policy on casualties, see Franklin Roosevelt for MacLeish, March 13, 1942, OF 4619, *ibid.*; Elmer Davis to Franklin Roosevelt (requesting an end to the ban on full casualty lists), Dec. 19, 1942, PSF "OWI," *ibid.* Most propaganda officials supported the release of a complete list of the casualties at Pearl Harbor, Wake, and Guam, but the interagency Committee on War Information (coordinating body for government propaganda) was divided on the issue. See "Draft Agenda for Comm. War Info. Mtg of January 19th," Jan. 17, 1942, "Agenda and Minutes, Jan. 1942," item 4, Records of the Office of War Information; and MacLeish to Franklin Roosevelt, Jan. 20, 1942, OF 4619, Roosevelt Papers. Support for release of losses in North Africa came from General George C. Marshall: "releasing the casualties. . . . would prove the seriousness of the situation." Telegram, Marshall to Dwight D. Eisenhower, Nov. 22, 1942, Bureau of Public Relations, File No. 000.7–80, Records of the Army Staff, RG 319 (National Archives).

[54] "Our pictures are gotten by the Signal Corps and yet they do not seem very anxious to be killed. I am prepared to take the matter up vigorously now and told Surles so—we must get it done

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as a glorious, relatively painless undertaking. And through all the images of the good fight shone the ever brightening light of victory at the end of the tunnel. Prospects of an American triumph alone served to justify the effort.

Nevertheless, the threat of a negotiated peace movement was never totally eliminated. In the spring of 1944 the President learned that anxiety over the expected invasion of France had raised sentiment in favor of negotiations with the German generals to a wartime high of 38 percent.[55] This information gave special meaning to a visit the President received in mid-May from Senator Burton K. Wheeler. A prewar advocate of a compromise resolution of the European war, Wheeler, for the first time since Pearl Harbor, again raised the issue, urging the President, according to his account, to sound out the Germans on the possibility of an immediate peace. Roosevelt countered by telling the Montanan that invasion preparations were already well under way, suggesting that the agitation of the peace issue would betray the men about to go into battle. Wheeler kept his silence.[56] The war, as long as it went well, was the administration's best device for securing a semblance of the unity that the nation did not otherwise have.

The American people shared few convictions concerning the war against Germany. Polling and general observations made during 1942 suggest that support for the war, though widespread, rested on a base made insecure by a large admixture of passivity, indifference, and outright hostility. Those who monitored and analyzed public attitudes, concerned by the strength and persistence of dissident opinion, particularly as it was reflected in sympathy for a negotiated peace with Germany's generals, urged administration propagandists, including the President, to "educate" the American public on the meaning of the war. The suggestion was inconsistent with Roosevelt's understanding of the problem, and given the profound divisions within American society, impolitic. Roosevelt saw little danger of a spontaneous "mass

better. . . ." Stimson Diary Ms., May 8, 1943, Henry L. Stimson Papers (Yale University Library). William L. Chenery, *So It Seemed* (New York, 1952), 278–79, relates how he and other editors were shown an unedited film of an amphibious landing, and all agreed that the ghastly scenes should not be shown to the public.

[55] "We consider the latest trend . . . so alarming that we believe it should be brought to the President's attention without delay." Attached survey shows sharp rise in April of the percentage favoring accepting offer of German army if it overthrew Adolf Hitler. Cantril to Frank C. Walker, May 8, 1944, Cantril and Gerard Lambert to Franklin Roosevelt, May 8, 1944, OF 857, Roosevelt Papers. (20 percent in April were willing to discuss peace with Hitler.) "Some Comparisons of Opinion Before and After the Invasion of France," a confidential report for the President from Cantril, July 26, 1944, PSF "Public Opinion," *ibid.*

[56] See Burton K. Wheeler and Paul F. Healy, *Yankee from the West* (Garden City, 1962), 390–91.

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movement'' against his war policy. What did concern him was the possibility that his longstanding political enemies would seize upon the issue of peace as the latest in their continuous efforts to embarrass, weaken, and thwart his administration. He chose therefore to combat dissidence by conducting the war in a manner likely to deny his enemies exploitable issues and circumstances.

The peace movement that had long worried Roosevelt never materialized. Although public sentiment for an honorable immediate settlement was strong at times, the leadership necessary to turn it into an effective force failed to surface. Roosevelt's unambivalent opposition to a ''premature peace,'' his skillful management of the war, and the good fortune that graced the nation's military efforts made peace an unpromising issue that the President's enemies could not exploit.

The fact that neither sentiment for a negotiated peace nor any other major dissident attitude gained significant public expression has left most observers with the impression that the nation was at once united by the Pearl Harbor attack.[57] This impression is correct only if unity is taken to mean the absence of outspoken or organized dissent. Government leaders, conscious of the divisions that lay beneath the surface consensus, were ultimately successful in keeping discontent and dissent from becoming disunity and disruption. Their success has obscured the fact that solidarity during World War II meant little more than majority acceptance of the course of events, and not a nearly universal public commitment to the persons, principles, and policies directing national affairs.

[57] Public meetings were held, and literature distributed explicitly arguing the merits of an immediate peace, although investigative reports do not suggest they constituted a peace movement of any significance. For FBI reports on two such activities, see files 800.20211 Peace House 11–12, and 800.20211 Peace Now Movement 7, General Records of the Department of State. See also Lawrence Wittner, *Rebels Against War: The American Peace Movement, 1941–1960* (New York, 1967), 57–58.

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